

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

OMB-01 AID-20 IO-12 EUR-25 RSR-01 /140 W

----- 047794

R 120555 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3557

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SIAGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2822

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, LA

SUBJECT: IMPASSE IN RLG- LPF NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUES

SUMMARY: RLG- LPF NEGOTIATIONS ADJOURNED FOR 5-6 DAYS UNTIL AFTER LAO NEW YEAR. LPF WILL ATTEND NEW YEAR CEREMONIES IN LUANG PRABANG WHERE THEY WILL PAY ALLEGIANCE TO THE KING. SAM NEUA REPLIED NEGATIVELY TO SOUVANNA'S SUGGESTION TO SEPARATE POLITICAL FROM MILITARY MATTERS IN LAOS. RLG/ LPF NEGOTIATIONS APPEAR TO BE AT A TEMPORARY IMPASSE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIOR TO MASS EXODUS OF LAO OFFICIALS FROM VIENTIANE TO LUANG PRABANG TO ATTEND LAO NEW YEAR CEREMONIES, DCM CALLED ON PHENG PHONGSAVAN EVENING APRIL 11 TO DETERMINE STATUS OF RLG- LPF NEGOTIATIONS. PHENG PHONGSAVAN CONFIRMED OUR ASSESSMENT REPORTED DURING THE PAST TEN DAYS THAT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO LAO SIDES ARE AT A TEMPORARY IMPASSE.

2. PHENG WAS DISCOURAGED. HE SAID PHOUN HAD COME TO SEE HIM TWICE THIS WEEK AND ON APRIL 11 TOLD HIM THAT SAM NEUA HAD GIVEN FIRM NEGATIVE REPLY TO SOUVANNA SUGGESTION TO SEPARATE POLITICAL FROM MILITARY ISSUES. SAM NEUA'S MESSAGE STRESSED THAT BOTH TOPICS MUST BE RESOLVED  
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SIMULTANEOUSLY. HENCE, PHENG NOTED, FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT MUST AWAIT SOLUTION OF MILITARY PROBLEMS.

3. PHENG SAID SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN DISCUSSING DISTRIBUTION OF PORTFOLIOS WITH PHOUN. LPF ARE INSISTING ON VICE PRIME MINISTERSHIP FOR SOUPHANOUVONG AND RLG HAS COUNTERED WITH PROPOSAL OF GIVING PRESIDENCY OF JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL TO LPF. LATTER HAVE REFUSED THIS COMPROMISE. LPF ARE INSISTING ON TOP SLOT IN MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND RLG HAS OFFERED LPF FINANCE IN RETURN. LPF HAS ALSO REFUSED THIS OFFER. TO THE EXTENT THAT LPF LINK FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT TO SETTLEMENT ON OUTSTANDING MILITARY ISSUES, PHENG SAID PROBLEM OF PORTFOLIOS IS REALLY NOT THE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING VIENTIANE AGREEMENT.

4. CERTAIN MILITARY DEMANDS OF THE LPF ARE PARTICULARLY UNACCEPTABLE TO RLG, PHENG SAID. SPECIFICALLY LPF WISH TO DRAW DEMARCATION LINE INDICATING TERRAIN HELD BY THE TWO SIDES AND PHENG THOUGHT IT WOULD BE PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT ON SUCH A LINE. STRONG LPF DEMAND FOR SUCH A LINE REFLECTS LPF INSISTENCE ON TWO SEPARATE IMERMEABLE ZONES WHICH CONFLICTS WITH SOUVANNA' S POLICY OF WORKING TOWARD EROSION OF THESE ZONES AND THEIR EVENTUAL INTEGRATION INTO THE NATION UNDER ONE ADMINISTRATION.

5. THE ONLY ENCOURAGING BIT OF NEWS, PHENG THOUGHT, WAS PHOUN SIPRASEUTH' S REQUEST FOR LPF DELEGATION TO ATTEND LAO NEW YEAR CEREMONY IN LUANG PRABANG. PHENG SAID HE FORWARDED APRIL 9 PHOUN' S REQUEST TO ROYAL PALACE IN LUANG PRABANG AND KING HAD APPROVED LPF ATTENDANCE. LPF WILL SEND THREE MAN DELEGATION ( PHOUN SIPRASEUTH, TIAO SOUK VONGSAK AND ONE SECRETARY) TO LUANG PRABANG FROM APRIL 13 TO 16. PHENG NOTED THAT LPF REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE ATTENDING RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES WITH KING AND THEIR PRESENCE IS PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY LPF OF KING AS SOVREIGN OF ALL OF LAOS.

6. PHENG CONCLUDED THAT HE HAS DISTINCT IMPRESSION FROM HIS MEETINGS WITH PHOUN THAT PWF NEGOTIATOR IN VIENTIANE IS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO " TREAD WATER" FOR THE TIME BEING  
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AND NOT TO TAKE ANY ACTION WHICH MIGHT LEAD TI IMPLEMENTA-

TION OF NEXT STEP OF VIENTIANE AGREEMENT. HOWEVER PHENG  
ADDED THAT PHOUN HAD AGREED WITH HIM ON IMPORTANCE OF

MAINTAINING CEASEFIRE IN LAOS ALTHOUGH PHOUN BLAMED RLG  
FOR THE VIOLATIONS WHICH HAVE OCCURED. WITH NEARLY ALL  
OFFICIALS OUT OF VIENTIANE FOR NEXT 5-6 DAYS PHENG SIAD  
THAT FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH LPF WILL BE POSTPONED  
UNTIL NEXT WEEK.  
GODLEY

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

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